

2017-2021

OUR WINNING MODELS



About us

Y-ACT believes that Africa's youth have a huge opportunity to shift in-country policy. In 2017, Y-ACT, Youth in Action was formed at Amref Health Africa by a group of young innovators with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to address challenges prioritized by youth.

Introduction

By the year 2030, people under the age of 35 are projected to make up 75% of the total population in Africa. This growing cohort faces challenges that are unique to or disproportionately experienced by their age group, including unemployment, HIV, unintended pregnancies, and maternal mortality. A failure to provide appropriate opportunities for this burgeoning population poses dire economic, political, cultural, and social consequences. Fully engaging youth in tackling their issues is no longer a choice, but an imperative in the development process. Unfortunately, youth continue to be left out of numerous policy decision-making processes and, as a result, policies are not consistently reflecting and addressing their true challenges and needs.

Since its inception in 2017, Y-ACT has provided tailored training, mentorship, coaching, and coalition building support to more than 150 youth advocates at over 65 youth-led organizations, mostly led by young women in seven focus counties across Kenya that have successfully advocated in coalitions for youth-prioritized policy change. More recently, Y-ACT has reached over 1,000 youth in 25 countries with its open-source digital advocacy training. Y-ACT has supported the organizations and staff in these coalitions to establish, grow, and sustain advocacy efforts that have achieved unprecedented policy change across the country and beyond.

Y-ACT uses a multi-faceted approach to strengthen advocacy capacity and impact, including:

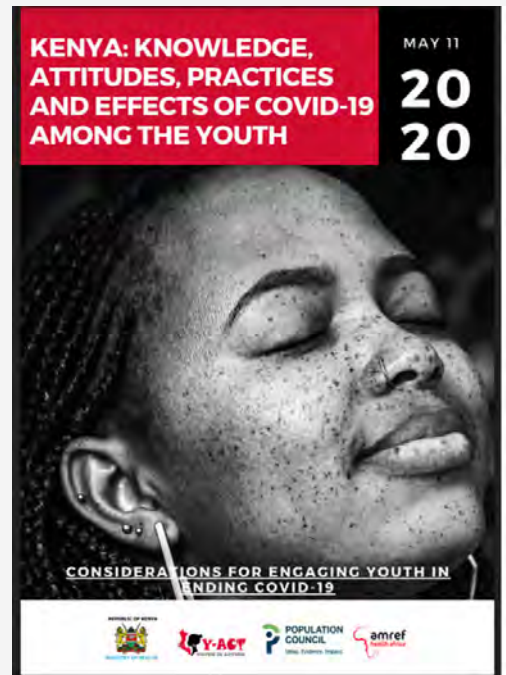
- 1) Youth-informed policy development.
- 2) Mobilizing youth for policy change.
- 3) Capacity strengthening of advocates, organizations, and policymakers.
- 4) Catalyzing change across the country and beyond.
- 5) Youth-led social accountability for policy commitments.

YOUTH-INFORMED POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Y-ACT uses a multi-faceted approach to strengthening advocacy capacity and impact, including:

SURVEYS conducted with the nearly 3,500 young people from over 880 youth-led organizations (over 50% led by young women) registered on the [Y-ACT Advocacy Platform](#).

FOCUS GROUPS facilitated by Y-ACT coalition members with their local youth networks, like the one that informed the Samburu County advocacy outlined in their [policy brief](#).



MOBILIZING YOUTH FOR POLICY CHANGE

Y-ACT identifies, connects, and supports coalitions in counties across Kenya by:

- Hiring regional coordinators from and in the counties where the coalitions are focused.
- Mapping and identifying coalition partners with complementary skills and networks.
- Assessing organizational assets and gaps, identifying areas in need of support and strengthening.
- Providing training and capacity strengthening for youth members, including support for resource mobilization.
- Linking local coalitions with national and Pan-African advocacy initiatives.

...AND GETTING RESULTS

Y-ACT has worked with youth advocates to establish youth-led coalitions in four diverse regions in Kenya:

- Urban region (Nairobi and Kisumu Counties)
- Rural region (Kakamega and Bungoma Counties)
- Pastoral region (Samburu County)
- Coastal region (Kilifi County)

Y-ACT coalitions have positioned themselves as trusted resources to county and national policymakers, providing efficient mechanisms for engaging youth in policymaking processes. As a result, Y-ACT coalition members sit on government committees and serve advisory functions in all Y-ACT counties and nationally. They have influenced numerous youth priorities in gender and SRHR outlined below but are increasingly engaging in other youth priorities including employment, education

Examples of Y-ACT policy advocacy successes include:

Nationally: Implementation of postnatal return-to-school guidelines for teen mothers; adoption of the Y-ACT Meaningful Youth Engagement Framework by Kenyan Parliament.

Nairobi County: Adoption of an Adolescent Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Framework and for implementation of the country strategy to curb teen pregnancy.

Samburu County: Creation of and participation in the county Technical Working Group seeking to include policies to prevent female genital mutilation in school guidelines.

Kakamega County: Adoption of a legal framework to support the establishment of SGBV centers to address rising cases of rape and defilement of youth in the county.

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING OF ADVOCATES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND POLICYMAKERS

ASSESSING ASSETS AND GAPS

Y-ACT uses a participatory approach with its advocacy partners to identify their assets and gaps in advocacy, organizational development, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (see specific topics in Figure 1). The data is then used to develop a capacity strengthening plan with partners that is assessed on a regular basis to monitor progress and revised accordingly.



LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE ADVOCACY CAPACITY

Y-ACT convened young advocacy experts, curriculum developers, and graphic designers to develop a [youth-focused digital advocacy training tool](#) that provides remote supervision and peer-to-peer learning. Supplemented by in-person workshops, coalition members in six target Kenyan counties use the [training modules](#) to develop their advocacy strategies and work-plans.

The curriculum includes topics such as:

- Advocacy strategy development.
- Policy & budget analysis.
- Gathering and use of evidence.
- Policymaker engagement.
- Advocacy communications, partnership, and coalition-building.

In the nine months the training has been made available open-source, Y-ACT reached over 1,000 learners from 25 countries.

My engagement at Y-ACT has been life-changing because I can now speak to policymakers with confidence. Y-ACT's advocacy training taught me how to frame my asks strategically. Before I would just complain to policymakers but now they listen to me because my asks are clear.

Josephine Adhiambo
25yrs-Nairobi County



STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Youth-led organizations often lack the structure, governance, and systems found in more established organizations, limiting their ability to attract, retain, and make best use of resources. Y-ACT utilizes Amref Health Africa's [Organizational Development Systems Strengthening](#) approach (outlined below) to assess, strengthen, and support the capacity of youth organizations in a range of areas outlined below. By strengthening their systems and operations, many Y-ACT partners have attracted new funding.

- Strategic planning.
- Finance, operations, and compliance.
- Administration and human resource management.
- Resource mobilization and sustainability.
- Governance and leadership.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING (MEL)

Y-ACT works with advocates and partners to develop MEL plans to assess their progress in achieving their advocacy goals and revise their approaches to maximize impact.

Outcome harvesting: Y-ACT trains advocates in the use of outcome harvesting to capture advocacy successes and lessons learned, asking key questions throughout the advocacy cycle.

Case studies: Y-ACT partners receive technical assistance and graphic design support in the process of documenting the learnings from the outcome harvesting and sharing them with others, outlining both the intended and unintended consequences of their advocacy actions.

Peer-to-peer learning: Y-ACT provides a range of platforms for sharing lessons learned including Twitter chats, workshops, webinars, and Facebook Live events.

MENTORSHIP AND COACHING

Many of the skills provided through Y-ACT's capacity strengthening approach are often new or in some cases require in-depth technical support, particularly for young organizations or for advocates who do not have experience in advocacy. Y-ACT's mentorship and coaching approach has enabled youth organizations to integrate skills across staff teams, unit, departments thus institutionalizing gains made.

INCREASING POLICYMAKER SKILLS IN MEANINGFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Y-ACT worked with a [Youth Steering Committee](#) to identify key indicators for [meaningful youth engagement](#) (MYE) in policymaking. They worked with young designers to develop an interactive [MYE scorecard](#) (see Figure 2) to assess and engage both policymakers and young people in gaining the skills and practicing activities needed for productive and meaningful relations. To date, 59 policymakers have been trained in MYE and the tool has become a foundational mechanism for county coalitions to establish relationships with their target policymakers. In 2020, the Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association partnered with Y-ACT to [launch](#) Kenya's [Youth Rising](#), a report tracking the state of MYE and plans for its improvement by national policymakers.



Figure 2: Meaningful Youth Engagement score-card.

CATALYZING CHANGE IN AFRICA

Y-ACT partners with others on campaigns to address youth priorities beyond Kenya, including...

YOUTH 4 UHC

Y-ACT led Amref Health Africa's call for youth to share their experiences and priorities to inform UHC policies and initiatives. Reaching out to [youth networks](#) across the continent and beyond, they engaged over 1,000 youth from 43 countries in calling for governments to prioritize youth in policymaking and resource allocation for UHC.

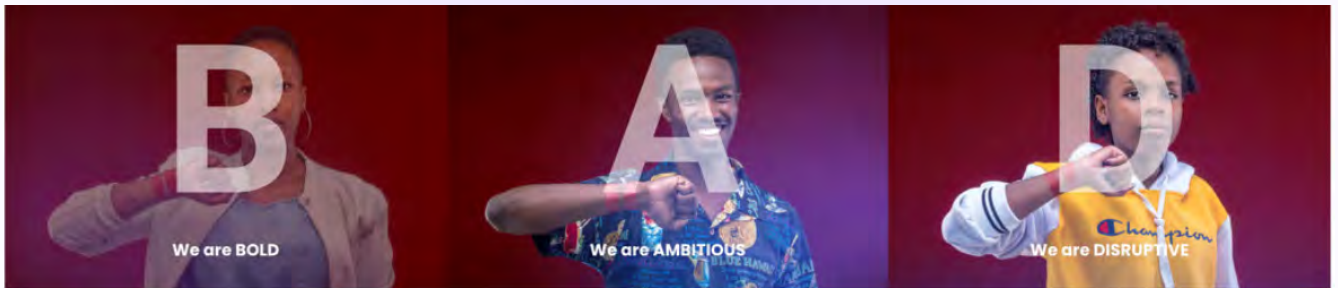
YOUTH POWER! HUB

In partnership with UNFPA ESARO and AfriYAN, Y-ACT led the creation of the [Youth Power! Hub](#), a Pan-African digital platform promoting youth-led accountability for the ICPD+25 commitments within the SDG Decade of Action. Anchored on the pillars of education, engagement, and collective action, the initiative engaged 26 youth-led organizations from 14 countries in cocreating a joint call to action for African leaders to take action on SRH priorities in the wake of COVID-19. The approximately 2,000 monthly visitors to the hub learn about progress of ICPD+25 commitments by country and provides an interactive chatbot to enable youth to find SRH resources.



SAUTI SASA

Y-ACT created [Sauti Sasa](#), the first youth-led movement to combat teenage pregnancy in Kenya. By engaging thousands of youth across the country, Y-ACT garnered commitments and endorsements from county leaders, county first ladies, and the Chair of the Council of Governors to ramp up efforts to prevent teenage pregnancy.



MANY

YOUNG

MINDS...

ONE

AMBITION

**End Teenage Pregnancies in
Kenya**

BUT MUCH MORE REMAINS TO BE DONE

Y-ACT has been called upon by policymakers and partners across the continent and beyond to expand their tools and reach to advance youth priorities in other topics and regions. We believe our impact can best be leveraged in the future by expanding our work in several target areas outlined below.

ADDING DIGITAL CONTENT BEYOND ADVOCACY

- Specific youth-prioritized advocacy topics including and beyond health, such as employment, education, and entrepreneurship.
- Social accountability content to ensure policies are implemented.
- Organizational development trainings in finance and administration. Youth data collection methods including survey design and focus group facilitation.
- Accreditation of training by recognized educational institutions.
- Training of trainers curricula to expand the number of youth capacity builders.
- Tips and tools for replicating the Y-ACT model in other countries. Translation of capacity strengthening tools in French, Spanish, and local languages.

GO DEEPER IN KENYA

Y-ACT has become the “go-to” youth coalition partner for policymakers in six counties across Kenya and is ready to expand across the country, focus on additional topics, and work with new youth populations.

EXPAND ACROSS THE CONTINENT...AND BEYOND

Y-ACT has supported youth colleagues in Asia, Africa, and other continents to increase their advocacy capacity and impact. We aim to formalize our technical assistance to additional countries and continents, supporting the replication of youth capacity and action movements across the globe.



To partner with Y-ACT on our journey raising youth voices across the globe for change, contact us at: youthadvocacy@amref.org and let us explore the opportunities that lie ahead!
www.yactmovement.org

PREPARED BY

Y-ACT YOUTH IN ACTION 2017-2021

